

**§ 20-73. New owner must get new certificate of title.**

(a) Time Limit. – A person to whom a vehicle is transferred, whether by purchase or otherwise, must apply to the Division for a new certificate of title. An application for a certificate of title must be submitted within 28 days after the vehicle is transferred. A person who must follow the procedure in G.S. 20-76 to get a certificate of title and who applies for a title within the required 20-day time limit or who transfers title to a vehicle pursuant to a sworn certificate pursuant to G.S. 20-52.1(d) is considered to have complied with this section even when the Division issues a certificate of title to the person after the time limit has elapsed.

A person may apply directly for a certificate of title or may allow another person, such as the person from whom the vehicle is transferred or a person who has a lien on the vehicle, to apply for a certificate of title on that person's behalf. A person to whom a vehicle is transferred is responsible for getting a certificate of title within the time limit regardless of whether the person allowed another to apply for a certificate of title on the person's behalf.

(b) Exceptions. – This section does not apply to any of the following:

- (1) A dealer or an insurance company to whom a vehicle is transferred when the transfer meets the requirements of G.S. 20-75.
- (2) A State agency that assists the United States Department of Defense with purchasing, transferring, or titling a vehicle to another State agency, a unit of local government, a volunteer fire department, or a volunteer rescue squad.

(c) Penalties. – A person to whom a vehicle is transferred who fails to apply for a certificate of title within the required time is subject to a civil penalty of twenty dollars (\$20.00) and is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. A person who undertakes to apply for a certificate of title on behalf of another person and who fails to apply for a title within the required time is subject to a civil penalty of twenty dollars (\$20.00). When a person to whom a vehicle is transferred fails to obtain a title within the required time because a person who undertook to apply for the certificate of title did not do so within the required time, the Division may impose a civil penalty only on the person who undertook to apply for the title. Civil penalties collected under this subsection shall be credited to the Highway Fund. (1937, c. 407, s. 37; 1939, c. 275; 1947, c. 219, s. 6; 1961, c. 360, s. 9; 1975, c. 716, s. 5; 1991, c. 689, s. 332; 1993, c. 539, s. 339; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2005-276, s. 44.1(j); 2009-81, s. 1; 2009-550, s. 2(b); 2015-241, s. 29.30(i); 2018-42, s. 2(g).)